

TESTIMONY OPPOSING BILL SB 7192 “An Act Concerning Municipal and Regional Opportunities and Efficiencies”.

To Honorable CT State Legislators, Joint Committee on Planning & Development:

I am voicing strong opposition to Sections 7-10 of Bill HB 7192 that pertain to regionalization, redistricting and consolidation of school districts and respectfully ask that you vote NO to this bill as long as these sections remain in this bill.

The bill requires setting up a commission made up of UNELECTED private citizens with NO accountability to the public whatsoever, and gives it the freedom to change how our school districts are set up and operate. This is just plain wrong. **There is no way to ensure that all members of this commission will only have the best interests of students, their schools, their education and their parents in mind. Members will be handpicked by sitting legislators leaving plenty of room for conflicts of interest. This is unacceptable. Constituents must have the right and the means to hold such a commission accountable. That does not appear to be the case in this bill.**

It is common knowledge that retirees are leaving Connecticut in droves. Great public schools are about the only reason left as to why working, tax-paying families are still tolerating its high taxes and continuing to live here. Giving an unelected commission the authority to make whatever changes they want to our public schools – something so critical to Connecticut’s very livelihood -- is RISKY and RECKLESS. Setting up years-long commissions and studies will ensure a dark cloud over the state’s job market and real estate markets for years to come, which will send the state into a downward spiral. It will ensure an exodus of residents (and their TAX DOLLARS) out of the state and deter new residents from moving in.

Lawmakers should stop tinkering with public schools hoping for some elusive savings years down the road and focus instead on attracting companies and jobs to Connecticut. Doing that will bring in immediate and substantial tax revenue.

I respectfully urge you to take the above thoughts into consideration and vote NO to bill HB 7192 as long as it includes school redistricting, regionalization and consolidation. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Madhura Warty, Wilton, CT